

## CALIFORNIA LITIGATION:

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By Dana J. Dunwoody

— Here's to London and La Jolla —

One of the Litigation Section's longest and most valued biannual traditions is affectionately called "A Week in Legal London" — a one-week personalized morning to night exploration and tour of the city's famous Royal Courts of Justice and Inns of Court. Several close friends of mine have attended this singular program. Allow me to describe the history and what you will see in the hopes of whetting your appetite for the program next spring from May 21 to May 26.

By the 19th century the British legal system was in dire need of reform. Dickens had satirized it in **Bleak House** and the **Pickwick Papers**. It was complex, costly and slow. The law was split into Equity (or Chancery) and Common Law. Each branch had widely differing procedures and was capable of arriving at radically different results on the same facts.

A reform movement grew during the 1840s with the ultimate aim of unifying the two branches of the law. In 1873, passage of the Judicature Act created a united High Court, which retained the divisions of Equity and Common Law, beneath a single Court of Appeal. During the same period a single building was constructed to house most of the superior courts, and has since been known as the Royal Courts of Justice. In the Royal Courts of Justice there are over 1000 rooms and, in the main building alone, three and one half miles of corridors.

Despite the relatively recent construction of some of the Royal Courts of Justice, the general area would still be recognizable to Shakespeare, as well as to every important criminal over the last few centuries. Its central spine is Fleet Street. The law courts are at the western end of the street, a gothic palace where criminal appeals and the most complex civil suits are heard. At the other is the Old Bailey, the traditional scene of the country's important criminal and treason trials.

The Inns of Court, venerable institutions in which the most elite English lawyers have their "chambers" or offices, line both sides of Fleet Street. Sealed from the bustle of the outside world by their stone gatehouses and uniformed porters, the Inns have stood largely unchanged since the 16th Century. There are four — Gray's Inn, Lincoln's, and the Inner and Middle Temples — and each has its own great hall, grand squares and narrow lanes connecting cobbled quadrangles around which are built the lawyers' chambers.

The Inns of Court date back to the 13th Century when English law was first formalized, and the need for adequately trained lawyers became apparent. Experienced lawyers started to take in students for training, and most of the students lived in the medieval inns and hostelries which surrounded the law courts. Gradually, these became centers of learning where students would attend lectures and take part in mock trials. By the 16th Century, it had become accepted that only students who had attended one of the inns were proficient enough to appear before the courts as advocates, and the inns claimed the sole responsibility for admitting barristers into the profession. Over the next three centuries, the smaller inns combined to form the four Inns of Court still thriving today.

Lincoln's Inn resembles an Oxford College, with a 17th Century chapel designed by Inigo Jones. The old hall was built in 1489, where Sir Thomas More first learned his law.

On the other side of Fleet Street from the law courts are the two inns known collectively as The Temple — the Middle Temple and the Inner temple. The Temple's origins lie with the great crusading order of the

Knights Templar, which was founded in the 12th Century to protect pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land. Although the order was abolished in the 13th Century, it has left its mark with the splendid Romanesque temple church, built in the style of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and one of only four round medieval churches still standing in England.

But the jewel of The Temple is the castellated Middle Temple hall, opened by Queen Elizabeth I in 1576 and the only hall in the Inns of Court to survive the intervening centuries almost totally intact. Under its great timbered ceiling, Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" was first performed in 1601 in the presence of both Elizabeth and Shakespeare himself. Around its walls are portraits of England's kings and queens, hung above a table made from the timbers of Sir Francis Drake's ship, the Golden Hind. It is said that when William Howard Taft, former chief justice and president of the United States, visited the Middle Temple hall in 1922, he was overcome by its splendors and burst into tears. ..

Perhaps you, too, will be similarly moved. Sign up and see.

You'll even get MCLE credits for the London trip, though how many has yet to be determined. To be sure, MCLE this year has suffered a constitutional attack in *Warden v. State Bar of California*, in which the California Supreme Court held that MCLE exemptions for retired Judges, state officers and elected officials, and law professors did not violate equal protection. The recently passed SB144 confirmed MCLE (although it eliminated the exemption for retired judges), and requires all non-exempt attorneys to obtain 25 hours of MCLE each three years.

There is an easy and enjoyable way to pick up 24 of those 25 hours — by attending the Litigation Section's Masters of the Courtroom program every year. The 2000 event Will bring you some of the country's best lawyers arguing a mock trial before an actual jury. In 2000, the Masters of the Courtroom symposium will take place May 5 through 7 in San Diego. The scene is the cliffside Hilton La Jolla Torrey Pines Hotel right on the championship Torrey Pines Golf Course overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

Never has an MCLE Course been tied up in a prettier package. Please mark your calendars.

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The journal is sent free to members of the Litigation Section.

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